

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—James Freeman Clarke.

VOL. IV.

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HOLY DILIGENCE.

"Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure."

Ye souls, the Father's very own,
Ye people of his choice,
Not only wonder, not alone
In his dear love rejoice.

He calleth, but he bids you still
Make the high calling sure:
He chooseth you to work his will,
And thus the crown secure.

He means for you a glorious part
In conflict as in grace:
He wills you to be pure in heart,
And thus to see his face.

He calls you to his work on earth
As to his bliss above,
Alike to show his glory forth
And to enjoy his love.

Your portion, souls elect, possess!
His gracious choice approve:
With your abiding faithfulness
Meet his eternal love!

Choose the front battle, chosen race!
The foremost foes engage!

Approve yourselves, ye heirs of grace,
Meet for the heritage.

Ascend from height to height divine,
Grace after grace put on,
And brighter with the beauty shine
That in the Saviour shone!

Thus richly ye shall enter in
The long prepared home;
Thus surely ye the crown shall win
And to the glory come.

—T. H. Gill.

NUMBERING OUR DAYS.

If we pause to consider what a year brings forth, we shall partly realize that we have been living very close to Almightiness, and that we have been dealt with by the wisdom which manages all worlds, raising them from night and nothingness, leading them through the course of their wonderful destiny, and taking us along with them. Have we not been riding on a star among the stars, and is not every year what William Gannett calls "a year of miracle"?

If we recall what we have witnessed and have experienced in this twelve months' progression, it will grow clear that every day is a sample of eternity. For the laws which govern spirit, like those which govern matter, come in everywhere, and always: they find room for their sweep and sway in our commonest concerns. The powers of creation and providence, of retribution and redemption, are just as young and fresh, just as active and complete in us and in the world around us, as they were ten thousand ages ago or as they will be ten thousand ages to come. The times in which we are living, and which we regard as merely ordinary, are what the old Hebrews would reverentially call "the years of the right hand of the Most High."

The laws of causation are constant and

uniform. The waters wear the stones; the coast lines slowly shift; the tree adds a new ring of wood with every season's growth; each form of matter holds in itself a record of its own history and of all the forces which have wrought upon it or within it.

In human character another kind of registration goes forward as surely,—the registered effect of all our thoughts, our feelings, our conduct, and of the influences that have entered into our lives from nature, from our fellow-creatures, and from the invisible world which we forever inhabit.

We have been numbering our days: we have been moving on. Matters do not stand with any of us as they did a year ago. Our life has grown richer or poorer, deeper or shallower. We are better or worse, more under the rule of truth and right or less. The voice that calls us upward sounds nearer and clearer or farther off and fainter, according as we have heeded or neglected its invitations. God is where he was. We have changed: we have come nearer to him by the rising quality of our life, or we have gone away from him by sinking into lower habits and under the dominion of lower principles.

At the end of a year we naturally think a little about life and time. What is life? No definition seems to make it plain, but perhaps we have a right to say that life is our share of God. While we touch the transient, and leave it, we live in the Eternal, and never leave it. Our lives are set fast in the larger life, like the limbs and leaves of a tree. In the very act of contemplating ourselves, we look into the infinite, just as, in contemplating a star, we look into the boundlessness of space. Without space, no stars: without God, no life.

Between every rising and setting sun we can gain visions of truth and beauty, we can exercise affections of goodness and purity, we can put our powers of mind and body under the discipline of virtue and usefulness, we can live and learn and love, we can do and enjoy and grow. Thus, in the very act of finding the world around us, we find ourselves, and acquire the use of our faculties. We store up the results of observation and reflection, we become acquainted with reality, we keep step with the larger order. We can convert the days and years into building material for the temple of a

noble personality. How precious, then, is time! how sacred, then, is life!

At a funeral I often find myself asking, "What did the man whose body lies here get out of his earthly years?" He came into this world an infant, with empty hands: what did he carry with him when he left? He has moved about among his fellows; he has looked on the earth and sky and into human eyes; thousands of days and nights have passed over his head; he has seen the flowers come and the leaves fall; he has felt the fever of desire and the chill of disappointment; he has heard words of truth and soft inward calls of reason and conscience. God gave him time and opportunity. What did he do with time? What use did he make of opportunity? What did he get out of life? But for the dead I know not how to answer these questions. They all turn into the prayer, "So teach us, who still move about among these fading phantoms,—so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom!"

Let us not shrink from a wholesome self-questioning. As the years go by, does life acquire deeper meaning and higher value? Do we care more for good things, and most for the best? Are we more ready to take a hint of improvement, more open to the reproofs of truth, more sensitive to the distinctions of right and wrong? Have we been growing more reasonable, calm, self-possessed, more amenable to discipline, and so more skilful in the worthy use of our faculties? Does nature seem more and say more to us because our eyes have opened to its pictures, our ears to its music, our hearts to its wonders? And this human world in which we live and move and have our being,—has it schooled us to a better understanding of what it is to be just and kind, pure and true, helpful and glad? Have we grown stronger to resist evil example, and yet more tender in our compassion toward human frailty and folly? Have we been drawing closer in fellowship to all good people, and more willing to do our part in all good work? If we can say Yes to such questions, let us thank God, who has helped us so to number our days as to learn from them the wisdom of the heavens.

By the right use of things seen and temporal we shall really rise into communion with things unseen and eternal.

And, if we do but move steadily upward, the light will increase, these "common things" will shine with heavenly meanings, higher forces will act on and through us, new faculties and new fountains of feeling will open within us, changing our burdens to wings; and our light afflictions, which some time we shall see were but for a moment, will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outworn shell by Life's unresting
sea!"

—C. G. Ames.

THE STILL HOUR.

AN APPEAL.

What mean these slow returns of love, these
days
Of withered prayer, of dead, unflowering
praise?
These hands of twilight laid on me, to keep
Dusk veils on holy vision? This most deep,
Most eyelid-heavy, lamentable sleep?

Lo, time is precious as it was before;
As sinful, sin; my goal as unattained:
And yet I drowse, and dream, and am not
pained
At God far off as ever heretofore,
At sin as flagrant as of old, or more.

Dear Lord, what can I do? I come to thee,
I have none other helper. Thou art free
To save me or to kill. But I appeal
To thy dear love, which cannot elsewhere deal
Than prove thyself my friend, thy will my
weal.

Wake, wake me, Lord! Arouse me. Let thy
fire
Loosen these icicles, and make them drop
And run into warm tears; for I aspire
To hold thee faster, dearer, warmer, nigher,
And love and serve thee henceforth without
stop.

—H. S. Sutton.

Almighty One, I know not how many or how few may be the morning suns which shall rise on my head ere that dawn which shall break in heaven. Let me not waste

the days yet allotted to me on earth, nor stand still upon my way; for well I know that to do so is to fall back. Aid me, Father of Spirits, by thine inward grace and outward providence to gain this day some advance in holiness and nearness to thee. I know that there lies open before me even now a glorious and beautiful life, had I but resolution to lead it,—a life of human kindness, in which all my words and acts should contribute to the welfare and virtue of those around me,—a life of truth and courage and self-restraint, in which my evil passions should be trampled down, till I could look back on the great task of life, and say, like Christ, "It is finished!" a life of love to thee, my God, in which my delight in thee should grow deeper and fuller year by year, till I should behold even here, and in this garb of flesh, the beginning of that eternal day of Adoration which shall endure when all the clusters of the suns fade out and die.

O merciful God, poor and weak and sinful as I am, help me to live that blessed life, and help me to begin it to-day.—"*Alone to the Alone*," F. P. Cobbe.

THE BIBLE CLASS.

THE WORD MADE FLESH.

[Continued from December number.]

But when God spake again, and uttered his second word, then "in him," in this divine speech and speaker, "was life." Life is a second word, because it is an advance in the divine revelations. Life in itself contains light. A living soul has an inward illumination: God is always speaking in it and through it. The soul, our inward life, is also our inward light. "The life was the light of men." "It shines in darkness," indeed,—darkened by human sin, darkened by human error. We do not comprehend the light that is within us. We do not see God plainly. The pure in heart see God. If we were pure in heart, we should see God as plainly with the inward eye as we see the universe with the outward eye; and, even as it is, what we really *know* of God, we know by this inward faculty, by this inward insight. This, then, is God's second word,—the life in the soul itself, which is an inner light.

The light within us is "the true light,

which lightens every man who comes into the world." This light of God is in every soul. There is enough of it to make men feel after God, trying to find Him who is not far from any one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being. By this inner light we are enabled to see something of the Eternal Power and Deity manifested in outward creation.

God has therefore spoken to the whole race of men, both in the outward universe and in their own souls. But "the light shines in darkness." We are not pure enough, truthful enough, generous enough, to see God; for there is an eternal law fixed in the order of nature, that spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Just as things of sense must be discerned through the senses, so things of the spirit must be discerned through the spirit. A man whose outward eyes are blind cannot see the sun, no matter how pure his heart may be. So a man whose heart is not pure cannot see God, no matter how keen his intellect or how clear his bodily senses. Now, it is a matter of fact that men do not see God plainly. They are groping and feeling for him through fifty different religions, fifty different creeds, and who knows how many forms of worship? The Buddhist in Eastern Asia is groping after God with a prayer-mill, turning a winch with his hand.

The Brahman feels after God by his sacrifices, his liturgy, his sacred books. The Indian woman by the river-bank holds up her hands, and cries, "O thou great Everywhere, save my child!" Some nations find in the sun the best emblem of the Deity. The African has his fetich—a plant, a stone, or a stick—in which he finds something divine. Thus men look abroad for the God who is within them. Therefore, it was necessary to speak again. In his infinite love, God uttered another word; and this word was Christ. There was nothing sudden or abrupt in the coming of this later word. As the day comes upon the earth in soft gradations, first a pale light in the east, forerunning the dawn, in which hangs the morning star like a lamp,—light-bearing Phosphoros, Lucifer, son of the morning; then a redder tinge, a glow of light in the opposite sky; and so wave after wave of light rolls up, extinguishing the stars, till the great sun shoots his first level ray across

forest tops or ocean waves,—so gradual, so well prepared, was the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. All whose faces were turned to the east saw this glow, saw the morning aurora long before. Isaiah saw the first gleam of the morning twilight,—saw that the day was coming in which law should change to love, and the inner principle of religion be joy and peace, not duty or fear. Many others saw it, and were called prophets; but their foresight consisted in looking in the right direction. And just before the sun rose came honest, earnest John the Baptist, as a witness of the coming light, to make men ready to receive it; in his honesty and humility, declaring that he himself was not the light, but only a witness of it,—declaring that the true light was already enlightening every man, if he would only see it. Thus God, who made the world, was always in the world, and yet not known by it; always coming to his own people, yet never received by them; only received by a few here and there, who so became his children, ceasing to be mere servants. There are always a few true children of God, his spiritual children; not outwardly children, because descended from Abraham, but inwardly children, because born of God's Spirit.

Thus God spoke. His first word was in the beginning, uttered in nature, providence, history; his second word was uttered in the human soul, giving it inward life and inward light; and his third word was spoken in Jesus Christ, in the Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us.

[This essay is too long to insert entire. We have printed the first portion, and will send the whole essay in pamphlet form to any one who desires to receive it. Address Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.]

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend.

write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where one would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all books offered in this department are given, and the postage paid.*

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall I send such a book to such a person?*" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

A four-pound package is the most that can be sent by *mail*. The postage on four pounds of *magazines* is 16 cts., on four pounds of *books* 32 cts.

Postage on magazines and all periodicals (weighing less than four pounds), 1 cent for four ounces; on bound books, 1 cent for two ounces. *Paper books are now sent by mail at the same rate as magazines, when issued periodically.*

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

"It is contrary to our rules to send requests for anything but reading matter. Those who infringe this rule will be dropped from our list.

These books are offered only to those who have not other means of procuring them. Those able to buy, or living in or near a town with a public library, are not invited to send requests.

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 3 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary henceforth to send a reference with the first request.

Readers, etc.

"Fifth Reader," Sargent; "First Class Reader," Hillard; "Standard Fourth Reader," Sargent; "New Language Lessons," Swinton; "Spelling Book," Worcester; "First Steps in English Literature," Gilman; Grimm's "Literature"; Morell's "English Literature."

Music.

"Melodia Sacra," "The Sunny Side," "Singing School Companion."

History.

"The Student's Gibbon"; Goodrich's "Pictorial History of France"; Goodrich's "Pictorial History of England"; Worcester's "History"; Creighton's "History of Rome"; Hale's "United States"; Child's "History of United States," Bownser; "Eighteen Christian Centuries," White; Markham's "History of England"; "Key to History" (The Hebrews); "Landmarks of History," England (White); "Army of the Cumberland," Cist; "Correspondence of Emperor Charles V."

Geography.

Mitchell's "Intermediate"; "Physical Geography," Geikie; Mitchell's "New School Geography"; Mitchell's "New School Atlas."

Science.

"Natural Philosophy," Quackenbos; Smith's "Anatomical Class Book"; "Catechism of Familiar Things"; "First Principles of Geology," Wells; "Knowledge for the People"; Hooker's "Natural History"; "Lectures on the Physical Forces," Faraday; "Sketches of Natural History"; Wood's "Object Lessons in Botany"; Johnston's Turner's "Chemistry."

Mathematics.

Greenleaf's "Common School Arithmetic"; Colburn's "Arithmetic"; "Elementary Geometry," Chauvenet; "Analytic Geometry," Peirce; "Outlines of Astronomy," Herschel; "Elementary Physics," Stewart.

Religious Books.

"Lessons upon Religious Duties"; "Selections from Fénelon"; Furness's "Family Prayers"; "Hymns of the Ages"; "Women of Christianity," Kavanagh; Drummond's

"Addresses"; "Catharine Adorna," Upham; "School Hymn Book"; "Plan of Salvation," Walker; "My Religion," Tolstoi; "Rutilius and Lucius," Wilberforce.

Fiction.

"Woman in White," Collins; "Confessions of Fitz-Boodle"; "The Innocents at Home," Mark Twain; "Valerie," Marryat; "Maid, Wife, or Widow," Alexander; "Outlaw and Lawmaker," Campbell-Praed; "The Talisman," "Woodstock," "Anne of Geierstein," Scott; "Gervase Skinner," Hook; "Felix Holt," Eliot; "Sam Lawson's Fireside Stories," H. B. Stowe; "Chronicles of the Canonicate," Scott; "Rab and his Friends," Brown; "Wee Wife," Carey.

Poetry.

"The Woman and the Queen"; Beddoe's "Poetical Works"; "Poetical and Prose Writings of Charles Sprague"; "A Child's Poems"; "Lays of a Lawyer," McVickar; "The Book of Latter-day Ballads"; "Wyndham Towers," Aldrich; Jean Ingelow's "Poems"; "Selections from Robert Browning"; Dyer's "Poems."

Miscellaneous.

"Travels and Observations of a Yankee Stone-cutter"; "Some Recollections of Rufus Choate"; "Protection Policy," Bastiat; "Neighborhood Guilds," Coit; "History of Free Trade in Tuscany"; "An Inland Voyage," Stevenson; "Education," Spencer; Essays by Brimley; "Essays upon Authors and Books," Jevons; "Study of Political Economy," Laughlin; "The German Soldier in the Wars of the United States," Rosengarten; Berkeley's "Principles of Knowledge"; "Over-production and Commercial Distress"; "The Study of Politics"; "Necessity and Progress of Civil Service Reform," Schurz; "Movements of our Population," Gannett; "Self-culture," Blaikie; "Primer of Greek Literature," Lawrence; "Critical and Miscellaneous Writings," Talfour; "Anglo-Saxon Freedom," Hosmer; "U. S. Debt, Finances," etc., Gibbons; "A B C of Finance," Newcomb; "A Talk with my Pupils," Sedgwick; "Introduction to Ethics," Jouffroy.

The following books are offered by the South Parish Branch of the Women's Alliance, Portsmouth, New Hampshire "Mili-

tary Life in Italy," De Amicis, translated by W. W. Cady; "Brinka, an American Countess," Mary Clare Spenser; "Letters to Dead Authors," Andrew Lang; "Recollections of Dr. John Brown," Alexander Peddie; "Marzio's Crucifix," F. Marion Crawford; "Rankell's Remains," "Duchess Amelia," Barrett Wendell; "Jasmin, Barber, Poet, and Philanthropist," Samuel Smiles; "Three Miss Kings," Ada Cambridge; "A Nihilist Princess," L. Gagneur; "An American Four-in-hand in Britain," Andrew Carnegie; the *Forum*, January to August, 1895; *McClure's Magazine*, July, 1895; *Scribner's Magazine*, July and August, 1895; *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, September and October, 1895; "A Child of the Century," John T. Wheelwright; "Albrecht," Arlo Bates; "Service Book of Second Unitarian Church of Baltimore," 1859; the *Silver Cross*, December, 1894, to November, 1895; "Sermons," by Rev. Orville Dewey; "Royal Truths," Henry Ward Beecher; "Sunday School Service Book"; "The Still Hour," Austin Phelps; "The Wreck of the 'White Bear,'" Vol. II., by Mrs. Ross; *Christian Register* from 1883; *Christian Register* for this year, two copies. Address Mrs. M. P. Harris, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

The following books are offered by the Eastport Alliance. Address Mrs. O. B. Whalen, Eastport, Maine: "Life and Times of Jesus," James Freeman Clarke; "Eight Cousins," Louisa M. Alcott; "Ivanhoe," Sir Walter Scott; "Robert Elsmere," Mrs. Ward; "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," Stevenson; "The Mayor of Casterbridge," Hardy; "The Stillwater Tragedy," Aldrich; "Blind Man's Offering," Bowen; *Century Magazine*, 1893; *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, 1890, 1891, incomplete; "Play Day Stories," "The Surprise," "Tell Tale from Hill and Dale," for children.

The Jamaica Plain Branch have a loan library of about one hundred books, which they will lend on the following conditions: only one book is loaned at one time, to be kept but one month; and the return postage is to be paid by borrower.

Send for catalogue to Miss M. F. Gill, Pond Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Also the Jamaica Plain Branch will give away a number of magazines, among them

several copies of *Success with Flowers*. Address Miss M. F. Gill, Pond Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., offers Monroe's "Readers," Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth; Franklin's "Readers," Fourth and Fifth; McGuffey's "Readers," Fourth and Fifth; "American School Music Reader"; Greenleaf's "Common School Arithmetic"; Greenleaf's "Intellectual Arithmetic"; "The Peerless Cook Book."

The Venah J. Warren Circle of King's Daughters offer the following books: "Zigzag Journeys in Classic Lands," Butterworth; Macaulay's "History of England," Vol. I.; "First Lessons in Natural Philosophy," Parker; "Westward Ho!" Kingsley; "Canterbury Tales," Vol. II., Harriet Lee; "White Lies," Charles Reade; "The Daltons," Charles Lever; "Yolande," Black; "The Mystery of a Hansom Cab," Hume; "Almost a Heroine," author of "Charles Auchester"; "The Complaining Millions of Men"; "Adventures in the Land of the Behemoth," Jules Verne; "Dutch Dialect Recitations"; "A Mother."

Magazines.

Good Housekeeping, 1891; *American Agriculturist*, 1885; *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1890-93. Address Miss Carrie L. Murdock, corner Washington and Allston Streets, Brighton, Mass.

A number of stereoscopic views are offered to any one who has a stereoscope. Apply to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.

Any one who would like some charades or puzzles may write to Miss H. A. Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass.

Mrs. William S. Mack, 274 Fox Street, Aurora, Illinois, offers the *New Unity* as it comes out, also *Arena* and odd numbers of *Forum* and *St. Nicholas*.

Mrs. T. C. Edwards, lately of Bloomfield, California, requests the friend who has been sending her *The Cheerful Letter* not to send any more until she sends her next permanent address.

The Newtonville Branch offers the following books: —

Song Books.

"The Prize"; "Christmas in Art and Song"; "Song Wreath"; "Merry Chimes"; "The Forest Choir"; "Second and Third Music Reader"; "High School Choir."

"Chatterbox" for 1883 and 1884; one of the "Lucy Books"; second volume of "The Women of Israel."

"History of England," "History of France," "History of Germany," "History of United States" (in words of one syllable); "The Boy Missionary"; "Boat Club"; "Dick Duncan"; "The Young Fur-traders"; "Rollo's Tour in Europe"; "The Well in the Rock," etc.; "The Castilian Martyrs"; "Charlie Scott"; "Little Mary's First Going to Church"; "The Juvenile Keepsake"; Grimms' "Fairy Tales"; "The Life of Jesus Christ," Beecher; Perry's "Bible Manual"; Peabody's "Lectures on Christian Doctrine"; Hooker's "Natural History"; "California Pictures," Avery; two copies "Child's History of England"; "Jamie's Mittens"; "Child's Book of Nature" (plants); "About Right and Wrong"; "Latin Grammar"; three copies Swinton's "Language Lessons"; "Robert Elsmere"; "An American Girl in London"; "Captain January"; "Little Coin, Much Care"; "Speech and Manners"; "Looking Backward"; "Mistress of the Manse"; "Mother's Recompense"; "Munich Life"; Cowper's "Poems"; "Half-hours with the Best Authors"; "Peep at the Pilgrim"; Tupper's "Poetical Works"; "Poems" by Mrs. Gage; "Character: Its Elements and Development"; "On the Wing"; "Public Men of To-day"; "Eudora"; "Under the Lilacs"; "The Lily of the Valley"; "The Rose-bud"; "The Master Builders"; "The Jubilee Singers of Fisk University"; "Friendship's Offering"; "A Tale of Three Lions"; "The Private Life of an Eastern King"; "Lindsay's Luck"; "Religious Souvenir"; "A Rogue's Life," Wilkie Collins; "Kidnapped"; "Herr Paulus"; Macy's "Civil Government"; "Geography."

Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass., offers (to young girls only), "A Great Emergency," Mrs. Ewing; to libraries only, "The Life of Columbus," "Life of Charles Sumner," Longfellow's "Hyperion," Longfellow's "Outre-mer"; to general readers, James Freeman Clarke's "Anti-slavery Days."

REQUESTS.

READ DIRECTIONS AT BEGINNING OF BOOK CLUB BEFORE WRITING.

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from:—

Rev. George H. Taylor, Rocky Ford, Colorado;

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Cayuta, Schuyler County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

I am a widow with one child, and earn support for myself and baby, now two years old. Have been a widow ever since she was a young babe. I will gladly forward any reading matter to a friend of mine, a mother with three small children and small means. I am a member of the German Baptist Church. Mrs. M. M. Calkins, Box 9, Virginia, Nebraska.

Mary Getsman, Carrollton, Carroll County, Ohio, asks for a Dictionary and any good reading matter.

Mrs. L. I. Elliott, Tom Bean, Grayson County, Texas, particularly desires the "Old Curiosity Shop," "Dombey and Son," "Adam Bede," and any magazines. Will be glad to pass the reading on to others.

Mrs. M. L. Richardson, Glade Creek, Tennessee, would be very grateful if some one would send her a recitation book suit-

able for children from eight to sixteen years of age.

Mrs. J. F. Boling, Garfield, Fresno County, California, would be especially pleased to receive a new magazine occasionally, as she seldom sees one.

Godey's Magazine or *Christian Herald* is asked for by Mrs. Mary E. Stevenson, West Bloomfield, Wisconsin.

Mrs. Susan Page, Sandown, Ransom County, North Dakota, asks for the *Nursery* for the children in her school who are poor, and have no reading other than their school books.

Mrs. A. B. Tuttle, Kenduskeag, Maine, will be grateful for any reading matter.

Mrs. Alice Reeves, Tom Bean, Texas, would be glad to receive vocal and instrumental music, classic not preferred.

Harper's Bazar is asked for by Mrs. M. M. Wormack, Farmville, Virginia.

Mrs. Alice Bell, Linden, Oklahoma, would be very glad to receive *People's Home Journal*.

Mrs. W. C. Murphy, Mountville, Ohio, wishes for distribution the following books: "Marcella," "A Modern Instance," "Wide, Wide World," "Wooing O't," "The Pioneers," or any children's books.

I am a teacher, and have been teaching in out-of-the-way places for two years or more, although I have a college education. My sympathy goes out to the poor people of this country, and I am trying to do what I can to elevate the morals and manners of the people.

I am so very poor myself that I can spend but little money in the cause. I want to ask you for some reading matter for the people here, and some for myself. If you will send the books, I will see that they are put to the best possible use. "Principles of Rhetoric"; "English Literature in Nineteenth Century"; "Rab and his Friends"; "Oliver Cromwell," Carlyle, 3 vols.; "History of England"; "How We are Governed"; "Six Months in Italy"; "Elementary Manual of Chemistry"; "Principles of Zoology"; Sherwin's "Elementary Algebra," with key; Hill's "First and Second Books in Geometry"; "A Modern Circle";

"Les Misérables"; "Endymion"; "Jane Eyre"; "Belinda"; "Barbara Heathcote's Trial"; "Vision of Sir Launfal"; Poems of Browning, Chaucer, Schiller, Byron, Shelley, Longfellow; "Stepping Heavenward"; "The True and the Beautiful." Also, any books for beginners in the French language, readers, grammars, etc. A German grammar, First and Second Readers (German), "Deutsches Sprach- und Lesebuch"; also any other books in German that would be a help to students. Allen and Greenough's "Latin Grammar," Cæsar's Commentaries. Also any papers and magazines. Address Mary Davis Anderson, Mocksville Depot, Calaham, North Carolina.

Will you please announce the death of little Edith Winchester in your paper, so that nothing more may be sent to her? She died the 6th of November. I have written to most of those that have been sending things to her; but some did not send any address, so I thought it would be better to write to you. We are very thankful to all for their kindness in helping to make her painful hours brighter and easier to bear. Yours sincerely, (Mrs.) R. C. Winchester.

Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,—It seems a long time since I wrote you a letter. There are so many of you, and you have done me so much good by correspondence; and the dear *Cheerful Letter* itself, what a message of love it is! There is always something in it that helps us on our way,—something to cheer us, and lift us out into the sunshine of life; and this is what I wish many times I could do,—carry a message of love into the lives of our dear "shut-ins." Life is full of trouble and sorrow; but we can do much to lift the burdens by being cheerful, and trying to look on the sunny side of life. Dear invalids and shut-ins, I wish I could just come in and help you a little in your days of pain and weariness. May the dear Lord guide you, and keep you always! Remember that the everlasting arms are always about you. Just as we take a little child in our arms and soothe it, so the Father gathers his suffering ones, and pities and loves them all with a great love. Every day this love is round about us, protecting and caring for us, asleep or awake. He is ever with us. Yours sincerely, I. H. N. Mrs. C. E. Deuel, Trenton, New York.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

TRUST.

A picture memory brings to me:
I look beyond the years, and see
Myself upon my mother's knee.

I feel her gentle hand restrain
My selfish moods, and know again
A child's blind sense of wrong and pain.

But wiser now, a man gray grown,
My childhood's needs are better known,
My mother's chastening love I own.

Gray grown, but in our Father's sight
A child still groping for the light
To read his works and ways aright.

I bow myself beneath his hand;
That pain itself for good was planned
I trust, but cannot understand.

I fondly dream it needs must be
That, as my mother dealt with me,
So with his children dealeth he.

I wait, and trust the end will prove
That here and there, below, above,
The chastening heals, the pain is love!

—J. G. Whittier.

A FEW WORDS TO MOTHERS WHO READ
"THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL."

All of you realize the sure and lasting influence of early training. Whatsoever is sown in the young mind, that shall we reap sooner or later.

I look with fear and trembling upon the future peace of our nation, whenever I think of the growing tendency to train our youth in military tactics. Even our churches and Sunday-schools are establishing military classes, going into camp, etc.

This fills the young mind with love of military life. If we school them in the art of war, that "relic of barbarism," so sure shall we rear a nation of warriors,—a nation that will ever be on the alert for the least pretext for war.

I think we can teach our children patriotism without this war spirit,—teach them that a foe won by gentle measures is more surely friend than one taken at the point of the bayonet.

If the time ever should come (God forbid!) when there is need to rise to arms, we need not fear that we cannot raise a valiant army for right.

Our history has more than once demonstrated that America's sons can leave field or shop to wield the sword, and that effectually, if need be.

Let us, as mothers, see to it that our influence is for a nation of peace.

(MRS.) MAY BELLVILLE.

Terrace Park, Ohio.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

By some accident a list of books was credited to the *Cambridge Branch* in the December number of *The Cheerful Letter* which was offered by another Branch or individual. If this individual or Branch will kindly send the right address to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass., the applications for these books will be forwarded.

The November and December numbers of *The Cheerful Letter* were both unavoidably delayed for a few days. We hope that this may not happen again; but we will ask all our friends to observe that it is possible, and not to be afraid the paper is lost, should it not arrive on the usual day. The editors are more anxious to have the paper sent out promptly than any one else can be, but there are now and then difficulties or accidents which cannot be avoided.

We have a New Year given to us. A year in which we may love each other and forgive each other, and so become more and more the children of God and the brothers and sisters of Christ.

A year in which we shall day by day meet the sorrowing, suffering, and sinful, and, while helping and comforting them, shall hear the voice of our Master, saying, "Ye have done it unto me."

A year which will bring us heavy trials, petty worries, harassing cares, sorrow, sickness, pain, anxiety, and bereavement.

And therefore a year filled with opportunities for patience, faith in God, hope for man, cheerful giving, steady perseverance, courage, self-sacrifice, Christian charity.

If we can believe in God's love and trust him this year, those among whom we live will be strengthened, will bear their sorrows better, and God's love will be more real to

them. If we are impatient, restless, and doubting, many a flickering flame of faith and hope will burn less clearly.

Let us each do our part toward making the place where we live a part of the kingdom of heaven!

"We wish you through this whole year, a heart right toward God,—hands ready to help your fellow-man."

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

CONUNDRUMS.

1. Why is the wick of a candle like Athens?
2. Why is Ireland likely to become very rich?
3. To what question can you answer nothing but yes?
4. Why is a beehive like a spectator?

ARITHMETICAL.

1. Take away one from nineteen, and have twenty remaining.
2. What is the difference between twice twenty-five and twice five and twenty?
3. Place four nines together, so as to make exactly one hundred.

THE FOREST.

1. What tree is of great use in history?
2. What tree smokes, when water is poured on it?
3. What tree withstands the fury of the ocean?
4. What tree is an officious gossip?
5. In what tree would you impound donkeys?
6. What tree is double?
7. With what trees do we speak?
8. What tree clothes half the world?
9. What tree is an article of winter dress?
10. What tree gives an invitation to wander?

Answers to enigmas in December number.

1. Balloon.
2. Sandwich.

We are in heaven already when we are full of love to God and man, in hell already when we lose that love. Heaven and hell are both in us, and all outward heavens and hells through which we may pass are only the reflections and supplements to our inward state.

J. F. C.

THE MINISTRATION OF OUR DEPARTED FRIENDS.

A NEW YEAR'S REVERIE.

While every year is taking one and another from the ranks of life and usefulness or the charmed circle of friendship and love, it is soothing to remember that the spiritual world is gaining in riches through the poverty of this.

In early life, with our friends all around us,—hearing their voices, cheered by their smiles,—death and the spiritual world are to us remote, misty, and half-fabulous; but, as we advance in our journey, and voice after voice is hushed and form after form vanishes from our side, and our shadow falls almost solitary on the hillside of life, the soul, by a necessity of its being, tends to the unseen and spiritual, and pursues in another life those it seeks in vain in this.

For, with every friend that dies, dies also some especial form of social enjoyment whose being depended on the peculiar character of that friend, till late in the afternoon of life the pilgrim seems to himself to have passed over to the unseen world in successive portions half his own spirit. . . .

It may be possible that a friend is sometimes taken because the Divine One sees that his ministry can act more powerfully from the unseen world than amid the infirmities of mortal intercourse. Here the soul distracted and hemmed in by human events and by bodily infirmities, often scarce knows itself, and makes no impression on others correspondent to its desires. The mother would fain electrify the heart of her child. She yearns and burns in vain to make her soul effective on its soul, and to inspire it with a spiritual and holy life; but all her own weaknesses, faults, and mortal cares cramp and confine her till death breaks all fetters, and then, first truly alive, risen, purified, and at rest, she may do calmly, sweetly, and certainly what, amid the tempests and tossings of life, she labored for painfully and fitfully. So, also, to generous souls who burn for the good of man, who deplore the shortness of life and the little that is permitted to any individual agency on earth, does this belief open a heavenly field. Think not, father or brother, long laboring for man, till thy sun

stands on the western mountains,—think not that thy day in this world is over. Perhaps, like Jesus, thou hast lived a human life and gained a human experience, to become, under and like him, a savior of thousands. Thou hast been through the preparation; but thy real work of good, thy full power of doing is yet to begin.

But, again, there are some spirits (and those of earth's choicest) to whom, so far as enjoyment to themselves or others is concerned, this life seems to have been a total failure. A hard hand from the first, and all the way through life, seems to have been laid upon them: they seem to live only to be chastened and crushed, and we lay them in the grave at last in mournful silence. To such what a vision is opened by this belief! This hard discipline has been the school and task-work by which their soul has been fitted for their invisible labors in a future life; and, when they pass the gates of the grave, their course of benevolent acting first begins, and they find themselves delighted possessors of what through many years they have sighed for,—the power of doing good. The year just past, like all other years, has taken from a thousand circles the sainted, the just, and the beloved: there are spots in a thousand graveyards which have become this year dearer than all the living world; but in the loneliness of sorrow how cheering to think that our lost ones are not wholly gone from us! They still may move about in our homes, shedding around an atmosphere of purity and peace, promptings of good, and reproofs of evil. We are compassed about by a cloud of witnesses, whose hearts throb in sympathy with every effort and struggle, and who thrill with joy at every success. How should this thought check and rebuke every worldly feeling and unworthy purpose, and enshrine us, in the midst of a forgetful and unspiritual world, with an atmosphere of heavenly peace! They have overcome, have risen, are crowned, glorified; but still they remain to us, our assistants, our comforters, and in every hour of darkness their voice speaks to us: "So we grieved, so we struggled, so we fainted, so we doubted; but we have overcome, we have obtained, we have seen, we have found, and in our victory behold the certainty of thy own."—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, February 7, at 10.30 A.M., at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

PLEASE READ THE FIRST PARAGRAPH IN THE "EDITOR'S CORNER."

Will any minister who receives this paper do us the favor to send to our secretary names of lonely people living in places remote from schools, libraries, and churches, especially mothers living on ranches or prairies, young people without means of education, and invalids, whether grown-up people or children.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

Our Book Club department has grown so large that we shall ask of all who in the future write to us for books to send the name of some minister as a reference,—when possible, the minister of the church to which they belong.

We fear that some of our subscribers have the impression that by subscribing for *The Cheerful Letter* they will be sure to receive books. The Book Club has proved an attractive department of our paper; and many of our subscribers are interested in sending books to those who are unable otherwise to obtain them. But we engage only to keep the Book Club open for offers and requests, and that under certain conditions.

We remind all who send parcels or boxes with books, papers, etc., to correspondents

or to libraries, that it is absolutely necessary to write at the same time to the receiver, enclosing the receipt which shows that the express or freight charges on the package have been paid. For want of this precaution, valuable packages have never been received. It is not probable that any of our *Cheerful Letter* friends send packages without prepaying them, but it is a common mistake of the express agents to charge the receiver for a prepaid package.

N.B.—PLEASE READ DIRECTIONS AT BEGINNING OF BOOK CLUB BEFORE WRITING FOR BOOKS.

The editor receives nearly every day notes which should go to the Book Club secretary (Mrs. Nichols), the treasurer (Miss Howe), or the secretary (Miss Langmaid). This greatly and needlessly increases her work. She would therefore request all readers of *The Cheerful Letter* before they address her to be kind enough to READ THE FOLLOWING

DIRECTIONS.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER,"—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals may be sent to the treasurer as above. The subscription is fifty cents a year.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Nichols; and to Miss Clarke only articles for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper, in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Louise Howe, as above.

Send all notices of *changes of address and requests for discontinuance* to Miss Howe. Please do not send these notices to the editor, as it causes delay in the correction.